(onychauxis)'. Most of us have other ways of recognizing eunuchs.

One general problem which still perplexes me, as it did eleven years ago, is the wisdom of trying to combine a book on signs and symptoms with a potted textbook of medicine. Although this difficulty still remains, there are many welcome improvements (notably in the index and in the standard of proof-reading). Unhappily the typeface in the main text is less clear than it was and contrasts unfavourably with that of the index.

I think that this is a valuable book, and that the first four chapters should be required reading for all students (and perhaps for their teachers too).

J R A MITCHELL

Medical Progress 1970–71
edited by Sir John Richardson Bart MVO MD FRCP
pp x+365 £3·60
London: Butterworths 1971

This remarkably informative book, available at a reasonable price, will be widely read. In particular it will find favour with the busy practitioner who wishes to have at hand a ready and readable account of what is new and important in the wide panorama of medical practice. It will also appeal to candidates taking higher degrees. The material is dealt with in some twenty-seven sections and covers a great variety of topics – there is even an account of mongolism in a chimpanzee that presented with behavioural abnormalities (humanoid?). Each section concludes with an impressive and useful list of references. Inevitably there is some duplication of material: viral hepatitis is dealt with in three separate sections. Cardiology, on the other hand, suffers from having three topical problems scattered in other sections, namely anti-arrhythmic agents, nutritional aspects of ischæmic heart disease and transplantation. The sections on general medicine and general surgery deal largely with gastroenterology. Perhaps this subject could be given a section of its own in future editions. This volume will be popular, and deservedly so. It is highly recommended.

IAN A D BOUCHIER

The Biology of Large RNA Viruses
Papers based on a Symposium,
Cambridge, England, 21–25 July 1969
edited by Richard D Barry and Brian W J Mahy
pp xvi+736 illustrated £10
London & New York: Academic Press 1970

This book is a collection of some 46 papers which were read at a symposium held at Cambridge in 1969. The term large RNA viruses is used to include those groups named – with varying degrees of official approval – myxoviruses, paramyxoviruses, rhabdoviruses, coronaviruses and leukoviruses. These viruses have a diameter of 100 nm or more and a lipid-containing envelope. They can be fairly readily distinguished from the smaller RNA viruses such as the arboviruses, reoviruses and the important picornavirus group which includes the polioviruses and the causative agents of common colds.

It will be clear from the title that this book is only concerned with fundamental aspects of these viruses. There are certainly no clinical grounds for considering them together, since the various viruses are able to induce such diverse diseases as a simple respiratory infection (influenza), systemic infections involving the skin (measles) and salivary glands (mumps), a 'slow' virus infection involving the central nervous system (rabies) and leukæmia.

The subject matter is predominantly concerned with the properties and mode of replication of the viral nucleic acid and also with the symmetry and synthesis of protein and other structural components. In addition there are papers on genetics, cell fusion and interferon production.

This book will clearly be of more interest to scientists than to clinicians: for the former it will provide a wealth of information on these very important viruses.

R B HEATH

The Distribution of the Blood Groups in the United Kingdom
by Ada C Kopeć
Oxford Monographs on Medical Genetics
pp ix+146 £8·50
London &c.: Oxford University Press 1970

This book describes in detail the distribution of the ABO groups and the distribution of the Rhesus-negative groups in the United Kingdom. The major source of material is the blood group frequencies derived by the blood grouping of new donors volunteering in the National Blood Transfusion Service. In the case of the ABO groups it is considered that consecutive new donors are random samples and representative of the local population. It seems likely that this is correct and it is further substantiated by examination of data from the RAF, where the blood group frequencies correspond very closely to those in the general survey; both, of course, being self-selected in different ways.

ABO distribution is given first in unit areas, town by town, and subsequently the areas are grouped together into larger areas, within each of which the population is homogeneous. Consequently, it is possible, by tables and by illustrative maps, to show the distribution of the ABO group frequencies within the country; it can be seen that there is a gradual increase in frequency of group O from south to north of Great Britain, whereas the reverse is the case for group A. In all, more than half-a-million results have been subjected to statistical analysis.

A similar study has been made of the Rh-system and the frequency of Rh-negatives has been studied and analysed. In this system the randomness of the material is not so certain as in the case of the ABO system, and there are other difficulties associated with the complexity of the Rh-system, so that such an analysis is bound to be somewhat less satisfactory than for the ABO system. Nevertheless, the author has done the best that is possible with the material available, and it is certainly a useful section of the book.

For those who are interested in genetics this book is of course invaluable, but it is equally valuable to many other classes of workers who are interested in the British people. Many studies have been made of the frequency of blood groups in disease and their possible association with disease, and this book will enable such workers to see whether or not the population with which their investigations are concerned is homogeneous, and to obtain a standard frequency with which to compare their results, even though their work may have been confined to a particularly small area of the country.

This book contains a wealth of detail unsurpassed by any other volume of a similar kind, particularly in the case of the ABO groups. The work contains and lists a large number of references and is a source of material which is not available elsewhere. It is a scholarly work, painstakingly and accurately compiled. Dr Kopeć is to be congratulated upon its success, and credit must also be given to the publishers for the clarity and effectiveness of the presentation.

F STRATTON

Myelomatosis
Fundamentals and Clinical Features
by I Snapper and A Kahn
pp xvii+380 illustrated sFr/DM 88 £9·30
Basel: S Karger 1971
London: Academic Press

After a cursory historical introduction, this beautifully produced book devotes the next nine chapters to a superficial survey of the scientific fundamentals of the subject.

The senior author is a clinician of wide and penetrating experience and the second half of the book, liberally sprinkled with notes on individual cases, recalls the *élan* with which he was wont to lecture or conduct a clinical seminar.

Each chapter may be read as an individual essay. I particularly enjoyed the chapters on amyloidosis and on Waldenström's disease. Unexpectedly, I was disappointed in the last chapter, on treatment – but treatment is disappointing.

A good prose style makes the reading of a book an enhanced pleasure. The authors' erudition is evident; it is therefore with diffidence that I suggest they read Milton's 'Areopagitica', a model of vigorous language, of lucidity and brevity.

The international literature abounds with reviews in this field. It is against this background that the book must be judged. As a memorial to a great clinician it will surely take its place, but hardly as a contribution to our advancing knowledge.

NICHOLAS H MARTIN

Pathology of Conducting Tissue of the Heart
by M J Davies MD MRCPath
pp vii+199 illustrated £4·20
London: Butterworths 1971

Every doctor knows that morphological study of the human conducting system is difficult, both in technique and in interpretation. In recent years, experts such as Rossi in Italy, Mahaim and Lenegre in France, and Lev, James, Titus and others in the USA have clarified and encouraged work in this field.

Dr Davies now joins the small band of workers in the UK, with an excellent pocket-sized monograph which has been a pleasure to study. It is an expansion of work on heart-block for which he is known internationally. It describes the anatomy of, and the methods for studying, the conducting system and its normal variations. Detailed accounts cover the pathology of heart block, the Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome and various arrhythmias, and there is a valuable concluding bibliography.

The book has an attractive format, the print is neat, the text comprehensive and clear, and the photographs carefully chosen and finely reproduced. Proof reading has been careful and very few mis-spellings persist. Perhaps in a future edition Dr Davies might improve diagrams 1, 27 and 93, mention Gee's glycoprotein, expand a little on congenital anomalies and add rhabdomyoma to the section on tumours.

I congratulate Dr Davies and heartily recommend his splendid book; it should earn wide popularity.

R E B HUDSON

Atlas of the Human Brain
by Donald H Ford and J P Schadé
2nd ed pp 234 illustrated £4·25
Amsterdam &c.: Elsevier 1971

This excellent book is really more than an atlas: it is also a laboratory guide, a form of dissecting manual. Like its first edition, it is an analysis of the human brain sectionalized into the main planes with full-sized photographs. With a suitable specimen, this book, and 'scalpel, fine forceps and scissors' as recommended, it is easily possible to obtain a three-dimensional appreciation of the macroscopic structure of the brain, and then proceed to a greater microscopic differentiation of